

corporal punishment, and an automatic demand for obedience as such, is not desirable for young children, has become widely influential, but as a result many mothers have become excessively nervous of interfering with their children at all, or taking any definite line of training. This is not yet the commonest fault; but it occurs very often—and especially in those who have thrown over the old automatic standards of good manners and obedience, to be enforced by immediate punishments and whippings, without having gained any ordered knowledge of children to put in their place.

The commonest situation of children to-day, especially in ordinary middle-class homes, is to suffer from an alternation of these two attitudes: a general lack of positive and informed guidance, relieved only by exasperated threats or bribings or actual whippings.¹

What the child actually needs is that the parents and the

¹ " I wonder if you could give me any help as I am quite at sea as to the best way of managing my little boy of two and a half years. Everything is a struggle. He says ' No ' to everything and. it is a fight to make him do what I want and not to give in to him. He screams, yells, sits down in the middle of the road. If he does not get his own way he whines and cries, and smacks and pinches those around him. He also bites. He really makes things very unhappy as life is a continual battle. At meals he will not sit still and eat properly, but bangs about with his spoon and stands up. He has to be strapped into his-cot at night or he climbs out. He always wets his bed every night. If I shut him in the nursery to make him tidy his toys, he screams and wets the floor on purpose and bangs his head on the door. If I try to help him tidy the toys he throws them at me. Nothing I give him to do interests him for more than two minutes. He does not go to sleep at once when in bed, but throws everything out of the cot, and asks for his chamber, so that I have to take it* even though I know he does not need it. He snatches any food or sweets left in his way, and takes tilings from the larder if the door is left open. He turns on all the gas taps and electric lights. When out for walks he runs away and dashes into the

road if I take my hand away from him. When in shops he pulls every-thing off shelves, etc. He does everything like this although we have done all we can to show him he must *not*, and to give him other occupa-tions. My husband says the only thing left is severe beatings (he has had occasional smacks), but I feel smacking is wrong. I fear I have even *bribed* him now and then with promise of a prize if he behaves, but this I feel is worse than smacking. He is a great disappointment to me. He has been worse since his baby sister arrived three months ago, although I do my best to be very loving to him, in case he feels jealous. He was not even happy on the beach at the seaside, because he wanted to be in the water the whole time and screamed and bit when I had to take him out and dress him, and spent the rest of the morning trying to rush in in his clothes when my back was turned. I am quite worn out with trying to cope with him."